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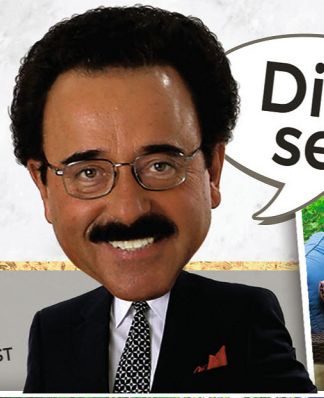

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Page 18: Photo by Chris Tarbox, Page 24: Photo by Chris Tarbox, Page 30: Photo by Mike Marcotte, Page 34: Photo courtesy of Time Travels, Inc.

ON THE COVER
The coastal town of Ogunquit, Maine is a massively popular GLBT vacation destination.
Photo by Chris Tarbox

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Editorial
Managing Editor Chris Tarbox 612-436-4692
Editorial Assistants Linda Raines 612-436-4660, Kassidy Tarala
Editor Emeritus Ethan Boatner
Editorial Associate George Holdgrafer
Contributors Ellen Krug, Steve Lenius, Jennifer Parello, Randy Stern, John Townsend, Bradley Traynor, Carla Waldemar

Advertising
Sales & Advertising Director Barry Leavitt 612-436-4690
Senior Account Executive Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699
Account Executives
Josh Elmore 612-436-4697
Nathan Johnson 612-436-4695
Richard Kranz 612-436-4675
Advertising Associate: George Holdgrafer
Sales & Event Administration:
Linda Raines 612-436-4660
Classifieds Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699
National Sales Representatives
Motivate Media 858-272-9023
NEMA 612-436-4698
Rivendell Media 212-242-6863

Creative
Digital Director Mike Hnida 612-436-4679
Photographer Sophia Hantzes
Lavender Studios Mike Hnida

Administration
Publisher Lavender Media, Inc.
President & CEO Stephen Rocheford 612-436-4665
Vice President & CC Pierre Tardif 612-436-4666
Chief Financial Officer Mary Lauer 612-436-4664
Distribution Manager/Administrative Assistant Casey Ubel 612-436-4660
Founders George Holdgrafer, Stephen Rocheford
Inspiration Steven W. Anderson (1954-1994), Timothy J. Lee (1968-2002), Russell Berg (1957-2005), Kathryn Rocheford (1914-2006), Jonathan Halverson (1974-2010), Adam Houghtaling (1984-2012), Walker Pearce (1946-2013), Tim Campbell (1939-2015), Donald Tardif (1942-2018)

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7701 York Ave S, Suite 225, Edina, MN 55435
612-436-4660 **Office**
612-436-4685 **Fax**
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FROM THE EDITOR | BY CHRIS TARBOX

Life Finds A Getaway

We all need a vacation. No matter who you are, the inherent and utter craziness of life necessitates a bit of a recreational reprieve every now and then, especially outside the confines of our homes and hometowns.

But while the word "vacation" conjures up images of summertime excursions for many, the fall season is a rather unsung hero when it comes to prime vacay time. It's a lot cooler out, it's more likely to be less crowded thanks to the new school year, and who can say no to those fall colors?

And lo! I present to thee the 2018 Fall Getaways Issue, brimming with suggestions to help satiate your autumnal wanderlust. Contained within are two pieces written by yours truly, chronicling the amazing vistas, eats and people of two towns rich in GLBT history: the classic metropolis of Chicago, Illinois, and the oceanside gem known as Ogunquit, Maine.

On top of that, Mike Marcotte takes a visit to our neighbors to the east in Door County, Wisconsin, and we also profile local travel agency Time Travels, Inc. to discuss tips for seniors looking for the perfect vacation.

So if you're itching to venture outside Minnesota for a spell in the autumn, come hither! To quote my favorite comic strip, "It's a magical world… let's go exploring!" ■

A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Getting Geared for Getting Away

Fall is my favorite travel season. There's hope of cooler weather, brighter colors, and fewer tourists. But recently, my pleasure has been plagued by anxiety. [Before proceeding, for full disclosure, I acknowledge that travel anxiety is a first-world problem. I merely share.]

Back when the world and I were young, I'd load my 4×5 camera and tripod, my set of 35mm viewfinder Leicas, attendant film holders, film canisters, hardboiled eggs and a plethora of other necessities into the car and drive from Boston to Galax, Virginia, for a week or so, shooting scenery, people and the Old Time Fiddler's Convention. Then I'd pack it up and drive back north.

For autumns in Paris, during several junkets in the '80s, I'd take a couple of suitcases and cameras (no 4×5 and tripod) and traipse about the City of Light for hours, walking and shooting. In Paris, everything is a photograph; whole buildings and details; a mansard roof, an oeil de boeuf window, shutters open or closed, a gargoyle-headed gutter spout.

But today, to address the Getaway "problem," an unsettling, "Do I have to go?" whine starts in my head directly after booking the flight eight or nine months in advance. Don't get out your tiny violins; I have my own.

I'm fine once I arrive, though as time encroaches, there's less ground-covering and more lounging on the couch in an Amsterdam flat watching swans and pleasure boats cruise by in the canal below.

As departed as Eloise and Abélard are Paris rambles through immense Paris cemetery Père Lachaise, where those lovers rest, as do Jim Morrison, Honoré de Balzac, and Antoine-Augustin Parmentier (introducer of the potato into European cuisine).

I'm off to Scotland in a couple of weeks, already wrestling with the "What have I done?" whispers. I deflect them with feverish activity—even cleaning. Knowing I must drive on the "wrong" side of the road, a litany of, "Keep to the left! Keep to the left!" loops treacherously around my brain, reminding me of the old "Twisted Fairy Tales," where Geppetto advises Pinocchio, "Stay wood!"

I trust *Lavender* readers have not yet experienced my own level of travel anxiety, and that you all are eagerly planning and preparing to enjoy your Fall Getaways. Bon Voyage! ■

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For Colored Girls. Image by Andy Weaverling

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It remains Ntozake Shange's most well-known play, though she also refers to it as a "choreopoem". This is a sign that *For Colored Girls* is a drama with lyrically poetic language, which can be enhanced by lyrical physical movement. It lends itself to imaginative physicality if addressed. So you can bet Penumbra Theatre will deliver on that because of choreographer Ananya Chatterjea. Her Ananya Dance Company has shaped a sterling reputation for intense and intimate all-female dance works.

Penumbra founder and the production's co-director, Lou Bellamy, is one of the most accomplished of living directors for mining the deep undercurrents of African-American plays. The other co-director is his daughter Sarah, who now holds the position as Penumbra's Artistic Director. Penumbra is unsurpassed in its record of powerful productions of African-American drama.

HAMILTON

Through Oct. 7
Orpheum Theatre, 910 Hennepin Ave. Minneapolis
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Alexander Hamilton's personal rise may be one of the most remarkable of its time, if not all time. He was an orphan, born out of wedlock in the West Indies and believed by some historians to have been of mixed race. Raised by a merchant, he would go north, and become an aid to Gen. George Washington in the Continental Army. Perhaps because of his turbulent and challenging childhood, youth, and early manhood, the die was cast for Hamilton to ultimately take his place in history as one of the strong personalities who would become the Founding Fathers of the United States. It seems to have been his destiny.

When Washington became President, Hamilton became the leader's and, therefore, the nation's first Secretary of the Treasury. He was a core author of the Federalist Papers (with John Jay and James Madison) in which Hamilton, among other points, advocated a one-man chief executive. He was a fierce nationalist, and firmly opposed the French Revolution's Jacobinical extremism. A military strategist, he wanted to mobilize against the French First Republic, but was thwarted by President John Adams. An interesting paradox is that Hamilton has been embraced by today's progressives because of the founder's own affinity to progressive values particular to his time. But ironically, today's progressives are often thought to be more aligned the French ethos than Hamilton would have ever sanctioned.

In 2016, Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical, *Hamilton*, won 11 Tony Awards and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. This year it won the Olivier Award for Best New Musical. Miranda's 2008 Best Musical Tony-winner, *In the Heights*, tested traditional Broadway limits with the sound of rap and salsa. *Hamilton's* score mixes hip-hop, jazz, blues, rap, R&B, and traditional Broadway show tune style. You can now see this production on stage at the Orpheum.

Gore Vidal's historical novel, titled *Burr*, one of the seven books in his magisterial Narratives of Empire series, is perhaps the most widely known book on Alexander Hamilton to GLBT readers. Miranda adapted his book for the *Hamilton* musical from Pulitzer Prize-winner Ron Chernow's biography titled *Alexander Hamilton*. Chernow is noted for his insights on financial history. Thomas Kail was nominated for the Best Director of a Musical Tony for *In the Heights* but finally won for *Hamilton*. Andy Blankenbuehler (choreography) and Alex Lacamoire (orchestrations) both won Tony Awards for both Miranda musicals.

Hamilton. Photo by Joan Marcus

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The Miracle Worker. Photo by Woodford Sisters

THE MIRACLE WORKER

Sept. 14-Oct.14
Yellow Tree Theatre, 320 5th Ave., Osseo
763-493-8733
www.yellowtreetheatre.com

Patrick Coyle is unique in Twin Cities show business. A wonderful actor, he was named *Lavender*'s Best Actor for *The Four-poster* at the Jungle in '02. He has excelled as playwright-director (Original Theatre's *Leitmotif*), as well as an accomplished filmmaker (*Detective Fiction, Into Temptation*). Coyle says that certain films seen during his youth profoundly affected him and shaped his artistic sensibility: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Hustler, West Side Story,* and *The Miracle Worker.*

It was the 1962 film of *The Miracle Worker* that was Coyle's original deep, if not primal, connection to the 1959 William Gibson play. It is that play which he has been in the process of directing for Osseo's Yellow Tree Theatre. He reflects, "I watched Patty Duke and Anne Bancroft in *The Miracle Worker* film for the first time when I was no more than six or seven. I walked away from that experience with insight I wasn't able to articulate until years later: great art has the power to change people. I was so moved by *The Miracle Worker* I was actually a different kid when I finally went to sleep that night."

Coyle says the script is honest and well-designed and that the story of teacher, Annie Sullivan, and deafblind student, Helen Keller "is powerful. Film director Arthur Penn's 1962 production is gorgeous. But what hit me between the eyes all those years ago—and what still rivets me to a film or stage play—is great, transcendent acting. Those performances have stuck with me all these years later."

Coyle auditioned over 130 actors for the roles and is thrilled over his two leads: Kiara Jackson as Annie Sullivan and Catie Bair as Helen Keller. Gibson's script, aside from from being compelling, has been exponentially influential. It's a bona fide classic that is one of the most widely known plays among people who ordinarily wouldn't even go to a theater.

Persons with disabilities have become recognized in our society as important contributors to the social fabric and to the national economy. Gibson actually began the development process for *The Miracle Worker* as a teleplay for *Playhouse 90* in 1957. Since then, great strides have been made in the U.S. for persons with disabilities, with the Americans With Disabilities Act signed into law by President George H. W. Bush in 1990. The visibility of and education about disabilities is the key to continued success and the continued popularity of a play like *The Miracle Worker* empowers that.

WAIT UNTIL DARK

Through Sept. 30
Theatre in the Round, 245 Cedar Ave.
Minneapolis
612-333-3010
www.theatreintheround.org

If you've ever seen Frederick Knott's 1966 thriller on stage or film, you recall it is set in the same period it was written. However, playwright Jeffrey Hatcher has changed the historical context. It portrays the nightmare experience of a blind woman trapped in an apartment with three male criminals.

Alissa Blaeser is directing *Wait Until Dark* for Theatre in the Round Players. She says, "I love that by Hatcher moving the play to 1944 instead of the '60s, it puts us right in the thick of World War II. All the men have more backstory that tells us why they aren't fighting in the war. Another big advantage to this version is he's made it a little less complicated than the original. There are less scene changes.

Wait Until Dark. Photo by Bob Suh

West of Central. Photo by Rich Ryan

Act I is made up of two scenes, and Act II runs straight through, while the original has five to six total scenes."

Wait Until Dark's lead role of Susy is a juicy one. Lee Remick was nominated for the Best Actress in a Play Tony Award. Audrey Hepburn was nominated for the Oscar for the film version. Heather Burmeister plays the lead at TRP. Blaeser teases that there is one large change in the Hatcher adaptation, but she can't tell us about it because it gives something away.

WEST OF CENTRAL

Sept. 14-Oct. 14
Pillsbury House Theatre, 3501 Chicago Ave.
Minneapolis
612-825-0459
www.pillsburyhousetheatre.org

Christina Ham has written two notable stage plays: *Crash Test Dummies* and *Nina Simone: Four Women*. Now her latest looks just as promising. In *West of Central*, set in 1966 after the Watts race riots in Los Angeles, acclaimed actress of Penumbra Theatre fame, Austene Van, plays detective Thelma Higgins. Co-actor Harry Waters Jr. plays a man whose life may be in danger as events unfold. Ham has a gift for taking highly charged political matter and shaping it into stage actions that hold an audience in its grip. She doesn't fall into didactic patterns. Instead, she engages, entertains and moves.

The Watts Riots began in August 1965, when two white policemen and a black man suspected of driving while intoxicated came into contact in the Watts neighborhood. A crowd gathered around and many saw the situation as an act of police aggression. This spurred on riots spreading over a 50 square miles in South Central Los Angeles. Looting, beatings, buildings set afire, and shootings raged forth. After five days of ferocity, 34 people died, over 1,000 were injured, over 3,500 were arrested, and property destruction amounted to $40 million in damages. ■

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PHOTO Travis Anderson Photography

MARTINPATRICK3

Pie & Mighty is a pop-up pie shop operating in the Twin Cities. Photo courtesy of Pie & Mighty

A Nice Change Of Pastry

A tendril of an aroma wafts out of the basement of a church in Powderhorn. It wraps its way around the neighborhood, near Lake Street, beckoning like something out of a Tex Avery cartoon. Inside the building, a knotted red bandana and tied up apron indicate it's business time for one radical church lady. Rachel Swan is making pie.

As much this is a story about pie, it's also the kind of love story that doesn't get told enough. The truth of a long-lasting relationship. This is more than a sweet-stuffed meet-cute.

Swan spent most of her career in hospitality. For years, she poured her heart and soul into running the front of house for Ann Kim at her wildly popular Pizzeria Lola. (Swan's a dedicated thrifter and many of those adorable plates came from her treasure hunts.) She's also a seeker, a passionate life-liver who has lost a lot of people she cares about. Life like that, the giving and the supporting of others, it can wear you out.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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Pie & Mighty offers pies in 7-inch and 9-inch sizes, and are handcrafted and made one at a time. Photo courtesy of Pie & Mighty

When faced with a personal tragedy involving her mother, Swan decided enough was enough with the hospitality, and headed to an Episcopal church and immersed herself in that community. She worked day and night and rarely left. One day, when walking into a ceremony inducting a new woman into the church clergy, she spotted a familiar face in the pews, Ratchet. They'd met years before at a dinner with mutual friends at Erte.

Karen "Ratchet" Mattison is the other side of the personality spectrum in many ways: a planner, an educator;, incurably practical. The two met for drinks, Swan thought she might be able to recruit a new church member, but the meeting soon turned decidedly date-y.

"Oh, I have to get my shit straight," Swan remembers thinking. Immediately they knew their connection was something special. She's AC to her DC, they both found a balance that created an incredible foundation. They soon married, bought a house—did the whole deal.

Then the recession hit and their foundation began to shift. The huge house they had once loved became too much. Where it had once been filled with parties and people, grew cavernous and they were going underwater on that mortgage.

This is where we get to pie. Out from under that house, the women were suddenly buoyed and Swan had an idea. The people of this desperate and all too dark world needed pie. She began working with a pastry chef friend to open a storefront. She took to the mission with laser focus, hunting, scouting and trying to learn everything she could about the business, but one more wrench was coming their way. Her friend, the chef, the chief pie maker was suddenly hit with major life turmoil. She could no longer be a part of the dream.

Swan was left with a half finished dream: crushed, desolate. That is when you need your partner and that singlar true-belief love that comes from facing uncertainty together for years on end. Ratchet said, "You can do this." Swan knew she could.

Rachel Swan and Karen Mattison are the proprietors of Pie & Mighty. Photo by Lynn Blankenship

Thus began an epic quest to master the age-old art of pinching butter and lard into dough. “Most pie bakers learn how to do this from their grandmothers, women with giant, gnarled hands with the sense-memory of what this should feel like when it’s right. I didn’t have that.”

She traveled and she used her connections in the industry. Jordan Smith, owner of Black Sheep Pizza, was a friend and mentor in the process. “I baked so many crusts. Part of what he did that really helped was ask, ‘how much flour did you use?’ ‘Salt?’ ‘Well, why did you do that?’ It really made me look at every part of the process until I found my perfect crust.”

The superlative lard-and-butter-based crust is just the tiniest bit salty. It balances the sweet, seasonal bounty packed inside each pie.

When Smith launched his Storm King Barbecue, a takeout place that has since shuttered, Swan was the pie lady. Her pies, sold under the moniker Pie & Mighty, were a success.

Customers now sign up for the Pie Loop. Every week, Swan sends out a lively email to subscribers that is almost as much fun to read as the pie is to eat. Pie pick up is two days a week, at the church and again at St. Paul’s Black Market Barbecue. Flavors change weekly and the emails read like the greatest Christmas card letter mom never wrote: filled with life updates (Ratchet just earned her doctorate) and GIFs.

The little business has been so successful that the two have nearly reached capacity for this chapter of the business. Pies sell out every week. Swan bakes like crazy, creating that irresistible perfume that permeates the neighborhood, while Mattison furiously folds and labels with pie boxes. The two are looking for a bakery space, but are also being very careful on how they grow. Right now, it’s going really well.

On pie pick up day, people’s faces light up, as the lid is lifted, their eyes feast upon the beauty within. It’s amazing what people will share at these small meetings: birthdays, graduations, death, illness, there are a million reasons for someone to order a pie. Each pickup comes with a deeply personal story and a humbly naked, soul-affirming glimpse at the heart of humanity.

“We just really want to get pie into the hands of everyone who needs one,” said Swan with a grin that sparks a shine in her eyes. “And everyone needs pie.” ■

Pie & Mighty
www.pieandmightymsp.com

Cloud Gate, better known as The Bean, is a popular public sculpture located in Chicago's Millennium Park.

WINDY CITY, TAKE MY BREATH AWAY

BY CHRIS TARBOX
Photos by Chris Tarbox

Explore Chicago's rich GLBT history, majestic downtown area, and yes, the pizza.

The first time I went to Chicago, I was 14 years old. Since my parents both originally hail from Illinois, my dad brought me down to the Windy City for a full two days of Cubs games, deep dish pizza, and as much sightseeing as an out-of-shape eighth grader could muster. Unfortunately, there was no return trip in the following years, and while what I can still recall from that trip was pleasant, all I could associate with Chicago was the great food and shiny tourist spots.

Chicago is renowned for its mastery of pizza, such as restaurants including Bongiorno's.

The Museum of Broadcast Communications hosts archives and exhibits celebrating radio and television history.

Upon returning to Chicago 17 years later, I can say without hesitation that there's more to Chicago than that. So much more.

I was incredibly lucky to get a chance to head out to Chi-Town again, and while the tourist attractions were still there (River Boat Tours! The Bean!), and while the food was still as delicious as ever (Deep dish sausage pizza at Bongiorno's! Cheeseburgers, cheeseburgers, cheeseburgers at Billy Goat Tavern!), I realized that I merely scratched the surface of a city that is one part architectural wonder, one part cultural melting pot, one part artistic haven, and one part treasure trove of history.

One major facet of Chicago's history is its rich GLBT community, and the focal point of Chicago's gay scene is none other than Boystown, a village in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. And in that village sits a beautiful, stark reminder of the contributions GLBT individuals have given the world throughout the course of history: The Legacy Walk, located on a stretch of North Halsted Street.

"Most of the bars on Halsted Street are inside buildings that are owned by the gay people that created those establishments," says Victor Salvo, creator and executive director of The Legacy Walk. "We're very anchored here in terms of the amount of money that's invested in the neighborhood, so in spite of the fact that there's been demographic changes around us, gay people can live in more places and still feel safe."

The Legacy Walk is the only outdoor museum and education center in the world dedicated to celebrating GLBT culture and history, with 38 bronze memorials lining the street recognizing international queer icons who have made a profound impact around the world, such as Harvey Milk, Alan Turing, Sally Ride, Frida Kahlo, Walt Whitman, and the 1969 Stonewall Inn rioters. Gay rights revolutionary Marsha P. Johnson and legendary composer Piotr Tchaikovsky are set to be added this October.

"I was inspired back in 1987 by a whole bunch of different political upheavals that were happening," says Salvo. "I was the chairperson for the March on Washington from this region… I was struck by this idea that we were part of living history. Now there was a plague that was going to kill every single person. We were expected to embrace our shared legacy as a people, yet no one knew what it was. Who will remember who came before us when we're gone, if we don't know ourselves?"

Downtown Chicago doesn't lack for architectural wonders, and tourists can take ferry tours on the Chicago River.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20

A major Boystown landmark is the Center on Halsted, a GLBT community center that offers a myriad of social services.

Boystown has long served as one of the largest GLBT communities in the United States.

Twenty-five years after Salvo's idea gestated, The Legacy Walk was born on Oct. 11, 2012, complementing a vast array of GLBT-friendly hotspots in the area. The biggest one, by far, is the Sidetrack nightclub, a boisterous and colorful attraction with great drinks and a Showtunes Night, where you can witness (or join in) a chorus of grown men singing along to songs from *Frozen* or *Evita*.

Another gay landmark is the Center on Halsted, a GLBT community center that offers social services ranging from HIV testing and counseling to computer training and culinary arts programs. Halsted Street also offers up Lark, a bar and restaurant that regularly puts on Dinner and Drag shows, as well as Cell Block, best known for leather nights and Saturday "Furr" nights for the most hirsute of fellas.

Of course, I wanted to take in as much of Chicago as I possibly could. The main hub for my stay in the city was the immaculate luxury riverfront LondonHouse Chicago, an absolutely stunning display of old school-meets-new school architecture that is literally steeped in Chi-Town history.

"This is the site of Ft. Dearborn, so literally the very first building ever built in Chicago was built right where we're standing," says LondonHouse concierge Shannon Boland. "Our tagline is 'It Starts Here', because the city literally sprang from where we are."

Now, I like living the good vacation life as much as anyone, and I'm happy to report that LondonHouse gladly accommodated me. From the regal suite that oversaw the Chicago River, to the excellent rooftop dining experience (try the lamb blade steak), to the 80-minutes-of-sheer-ecstasy that was the LondonHouse massage spa, it was the perfect companion piece to a beautiful Chi-Town adventure.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

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The Boystown village boasts a wide array of GLBT clubs and dance venues, such as the Sidetrack, Roscoe's, and Cell Block.

The Legacy Walk in the Boystown neighborhood enshrines nearly 40 international GLBT legends and luminaries up and down Halsted Street.

Looking for a prime hotel experience in Chicago? LondonHouse Chicago is luxury redefined, with amazing interior decor, meeting and event spaces, excellent rooftop dining, and regal suites.

When I wasn't being completely overwhelmed by the sheer cinematic scope of downtown Chicago, I was mesmerized by all the wonderful things and places the city had to offer, such as the famed Millennium Park, where you can enjoy free film nights, concerts, or even yoga in the park; the aforementioned boat tours, where you can soak in the history and beauty of Chicago with the help of Midwestern gondoliers; and my personal favorite, the Museum of Broadcast Communications, which currently features a terrific *Saturday Night Live* exhibit (through this December) with authentic props, sets, scripts, and memorabilia from the sketch comedy's history. And Boland believes that fall is the prime time for tourists to come visit the city.

"In the winter, it's super cold, and in the summer, it's super hot," she says. "So fall is the best time to see Chicago. I feel like the architecture kind of comes to life, the changing of the seasons, the parks are just beautiful. We wait all year for those September, October months, so it's the best time to be here."

Even after my second visit 17 years later, I once again feel like I've only scratched the surface. And you will, too. For more information on The Legacy Walk, visit www.legacyprojectchicago.com. For more information on LondonHouse, visit londonhousechicago.com. ■

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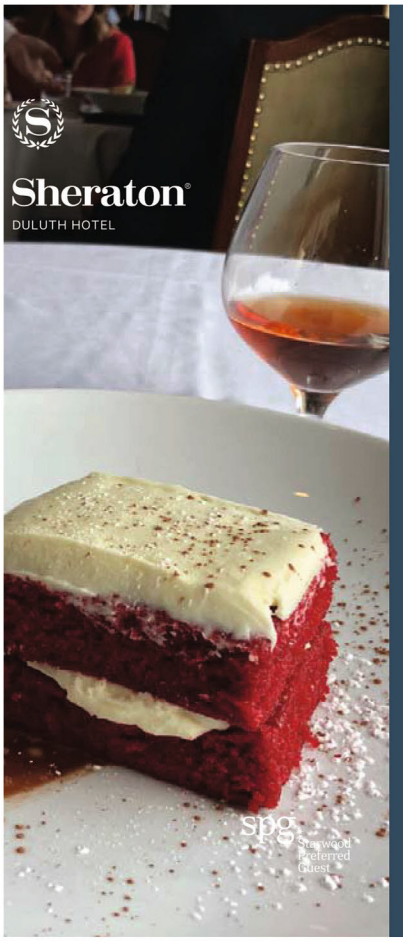

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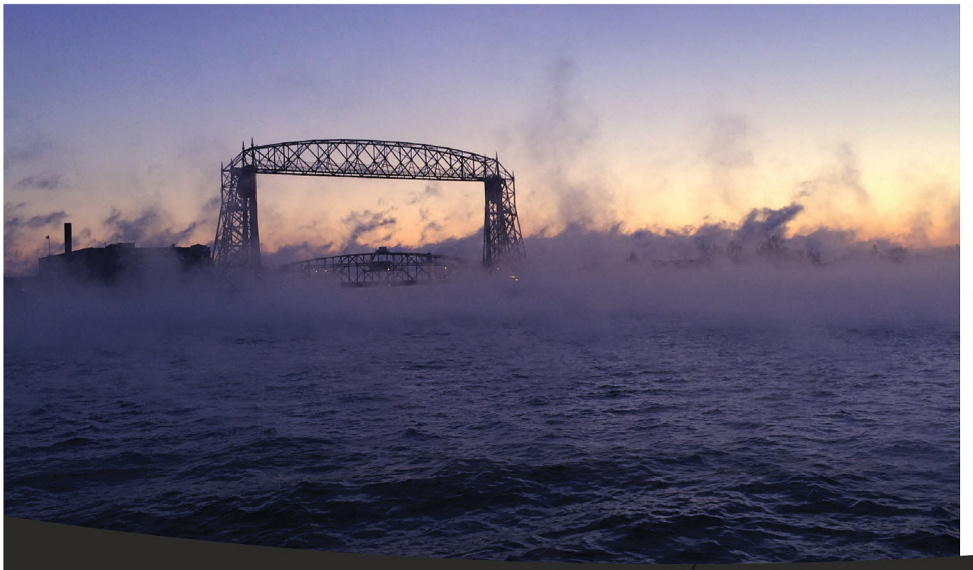

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Photo by Chris Tarbox

YOU CAN'T QUIT OGUNQUIT

Discover the Hidden Gem in The Crown of New England.

For the longest time, coastal Maine was my dream vacation. Though I've been to a number of divine destinations across North America, a journey to The Pine Tree State always eluded my grasp. There have been plenty of reasons for the allure: the picturesque oceanside vistas, the copious amounts of seafood, and also the fact that my paternal ancestors just so happened to emigrate to America by way of Maine. This was the fatherland! With lobster rolls!

BY CHRIS TARBOX

If there's anything Ogunquit is in high supply of, it's jaw-dropping views. Photo by Chris Tarbox

Imagine my elation, then, when I finally got a chance to not only travel to Maine, but to a small town with a big heart that made all my coastal dreams come true: Ogunquit, the hidden gem of the crown of New England.

Translated from the native Abenaki language as "beautiful place by the sea," Ogunquit is a mere four square miles of land with around 900 year-round residents. But never let the small package belie not only the tremendous sense of community and camaraderie, but also the fact that the coastal village town—only 45 minutes from Portland—is a prominent destination for the GLBT community.

In fact, one-third of the businesses in Ogunquit are GLBT-owned and operated, and you'll see your fair share of rainbow flags adorning homes and storefronts all around town. And business is bustling, attracting not only all-year and summertime residents, but also tourists from Massachusetts and New York looking for a fabulous day trip.

There's just so much to do in Ogunquit that it could fill five articles, let alone one, so I'll give you a walkthrough of the many joys I got to experience. As my wonderful guide Rusty Hayes—who also serves on the town's planning board—would explain to me, Ogunquit bore a harmonious mix of gay and straight denizens, never feeling as though either party felt out of place. It just felt like home.

And for me, my home for the trip was the ultra-cozy Moon Over Maine bed and breakfast, boasting celestial-themed rooms and delicious homemade scones every morning. It's one of many wonderful B&Bs in town—including Dragonfly Guest House and Ogunquit Beach Inn—and it's only a mere six-minute walk from the heavenly three-mile-long Ogunquit Beach, which intoxicated this writer with its brilliant blue waters and magnetic ocean breezes. The coast also serves as an ideal venue for surfing and sailing, such as when I took an amazing 90-minute trip out of Perkins Cove and into the welcoming arms of the Atlantic Ocean.

Brix + Brine offers a staggering array of delicious food, such as crab melts and oyster and shrimp platters. Photo by Chris Tarbox

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

Kick back and be kissed by the sweet breeze of the Atlantic Ocean with a sailboat ride out of Ogunquit's Perkins Cove. Photo by Chris Tarbox

And because there is so much to do in Ogunquit, visitors can hitch a ride on the Beach Caddie, a "little yellow taxi" that'll take you anywhere from the Amore Breakfast restaurant for brunch (which I did with retired Congressman and Ogunquit resident Barney Frank) and Brix + Brine for lunch (give the oysters and Maine Crab Melt sandwich a go), to the dinnertime brilliance of Bessie's (lobster rolls, please and thank you), and the sweet mix of Italian and seafood at La Pizzeria.

If you couldn't tell by now, Ogunquit doesn't mess around when it comes to satisfying one's appetite. How could I forget the sumptuous pastries at Bread & Roses Bakery or all of the deli-fresh groceries and wines courtesy of the popular Village Food Market? And once again, all of the aforementioned businesses? All gay-owned and operated.

And trust me, the Rainbow Connection here is strong. The largest gay nightclub in northern New England and easily the nucleus of Ogunquit's gay scene, Mainestreet is a song and dance spectacular in every sense with two dance rooms, two outside decks, three bars, and a whole lot of attitude. Everything from drag shows to tea dances light up Mainestreet, and it often plays host to drag luminaries such as Paige Turner and the Dueling Drag Divas.

Ogunquit's nightlife establishments regularly play host to entertainers, musicians, and drag queens, such as the incomparable Paige Turner. Photo by Chris Tarbox

Just a hop, skip, and a jump from Mainestreet is the famed Front Porch piano bar, home to a slew of amazing dishes and cocktails, not to mention a raucous singalong piano bar experience, as well as a rotating cadre of terrific entertainers. During my visit, it was Disco Night, starring the glamorous Kim Kuzma, who even brought yours truly onstage to dance to Donna Summer in front of a packed house. Let's just say that I made my New England ancestors proud.

Surfing is a popular pasttime in Ogunquit—even during the fall and winter seasons. Photo by Jim Ready

Ready to beach like you've never beached before. Three miles of Ogunquit Beach will intoxicate you with its brilliant waters and gorgeous coastline. Photo by Chris Tarbox

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

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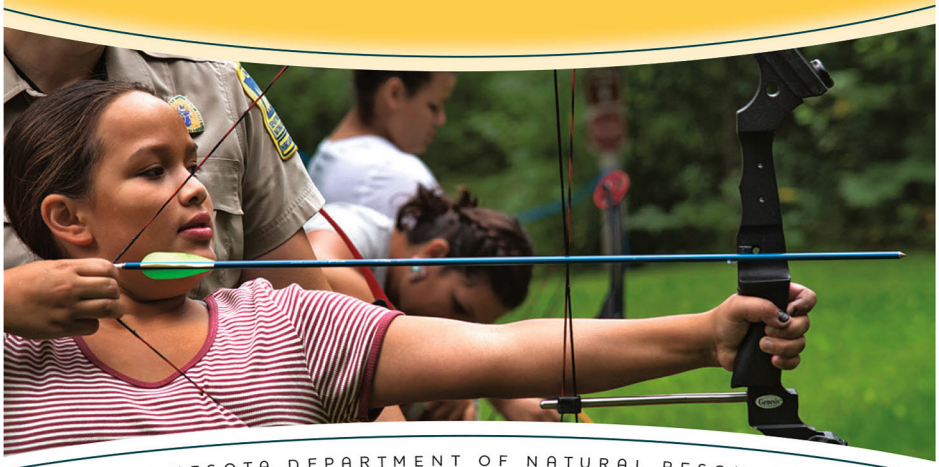

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There's quite a selection of lovely Bed & Breakfasts available in Ogunquit, including the delightful Moon Over Maine. Photo by Chris Tarbox

And it helps that for such a small town, Ogunquit fully embraces the arts as a crucial aspect of its culture. I was lucky enough to catch a tremendous production of An American in Paris at the legendary Ogunquit Playhouse, the historic summer playhouse which runs shows from May to October. The playhouse will be presenting a production of Jersey Boys through Oct. 28 before it closes up for the winter, so get a show in while you can!

Speaking of art, don't you dare pass up a walk through the Ogunquit Museum of American Art, located right on the coast and boasting over 3,000 pieces of art on permanent display. The museum is the only one of its kind in Maine dedicated to the preservation of American art, and it overlooks the gorgeous scenery of Narrow Cove—a perfect spot for a fall visit.

A perfect beach experience? Check. Sailboats and hiking? Check. Fabulous nightlife? Check.

The legendary Ogunquit Playhouse is a prime venue for top-notch theatrical productions. Photo by Chris Tarbox

You'll have no problem fulfilling your seafood dreams in Ogunquit, such as the lobster rolls at Bessie's. Photo by Chris Tarbox

Looking for the ultimate New England gay club experience? Look no further than the ultra-popular Maine Street. Photo by Chris Tarbox

Wonderful, wonderful people? Check. All the seafood your greedy stomach could ask for? That's a check, good buddy. I have paragraphs and paragraphs of other reasons to visit Ogunquit, but all I can say is that you'll have to visit this hidden gem to learn for yourself. For more information on planning your own journey to this beautiful place by the sea, visit gaycationland.com. ■

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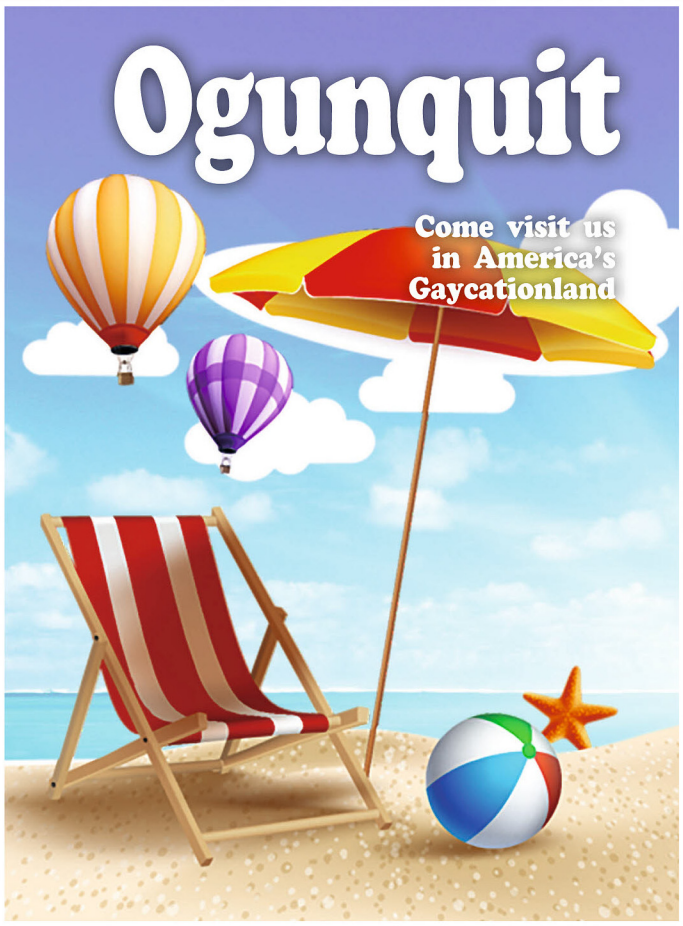

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Anderson Dock, located in the town of Ephraim, is a popular Door County tourist destination.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE IN DOOR COUNTY

BY MIKE MARCOTTE
Photos by Mike Marcotte

Escape to Eastern Wisconsin, whether it's two days or seven.

Located about one hour northeast of Green Bay, Wisconsin, Door County is the authority in hospitality and a haven for those looking to get away. You can watch the sunrise over Lake Michigan, and after just a couple miles in the car, watch it set over Green Bay. There's plenty of food, and if you love cherries, this place needs to be your next vacation.

Feeling crafty during your Door County journey. Hands On Art Studio offers a number of multimedia studios to let you make your own project.

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Al Johnson's Swedish Restaurant is a popular dining destination in Door County.

Don't forget to nosh on the Cherry Stuffed French Toast at White Gull Inn.

Sturgeon Bay serves as the door to Door County. It's the gateway to all the action. To get from Sturgeon Bay to the county's northern tip, it's nearly an hour of driving. A car is a must for this trip. Ride sharing services like Uber and Lyft aren't available and you won't see people hailing taxis. Also, cell phone reception is lackluster at best.

WHERE TO STAY

Walking into the guest house at Chanticleer Guest House, I immediately noticed a large New York Times article feature raving about the bed and breakfast on the wall. They deserve all that praise and more.

Owners (and partners) Darrin Day and Bryon Groeschl pour their heart into the property, cooking breakfast for guests and delivering it to rooms in the morning, striking up conversation around evening bonfires and offering suggestions about what to do in Door County. They purchased the rundown property outside of Sturgeon Bay in 1993 and spent years updating the main house, built in 1916, along with a barn, which now both host suites.

I stayed in a loft equipped with French doors to a massive bathroom, a jacuzzi, and an easy exit through a balcony patio.

Door County officials recommend that you book B&Bs for the summer season six to eight months in advance. Those who vacation there end up booking their stay for the following year before they even leave.

WHAT TO DO

With the amount of driving you will do around the county, I recommend you plan a three-plus-day trip. I crammed four days worth of activities into two. It was a lot.

I'm breaking my Door County picks into two itineraries—what you must do during a long weekend trip and what you can do with a bit more time.

LONG WEEKEND: THE MUST-DO LIST

If you only have a weekend to experience Door County, start here.

• Al Johnson's Swedish Restaurant, Sister Bay

There aren't many businesses with goats grazing on the roof. That's because Al Johnson's Swedish Restaurant actually owns a trademark to the fascinating oddity. The whole story began when Al received a goat as a birthday gift that was more of a prank than anything. Today, four to seven goats are bussed over to the restaurant daily and spend their days looking down at visitors. They come down when it's warmer than 85 degrees or if it's raining.

When you're there, Lars Johnson, one of Al's kids running the restaurant today, says to order the pickled herring plate; it's one of his favorites. The most popular menu item are the Swedish pancakes. Make sure to get lingonberries on top. The restaurant is the largest importer of the fruit in the United States.

• Anderson Dock

Anderson Dock, located in the town of Ephraim, is a Door County must-see. Historically, visiting boaters would sign the walls of the warehouse with their boat's name and the years it docked there. It now boasts messages of love and friendship of those who visit. If you want to sign it, bring your own paint. It makes for a great Instagram photo.

• Brunch at the White Gull Inn

My must-dos while in Door County have a lot to do with food.

White Gull Inn's cherry stuffed French toast has a cream cheese filling and plenty of Door County cherries. It's rich and tough for one human to take down a full order. The White Gull won Good Morning America's Best Breakfast Challenge in 2010.

THREE-PLUS-DAYS: THE SHOULD-DO LIST

If you have more time, add these stops.

• Hands On Art Studio

The working farm is home to multiple studios offering you to make and take your own project. There's a metal studio where you weld your own wine rack, a spin-art wheel for canvas or t-shirts, and a ceramics studio where you can paint countless objects.

I went for the fused glass studio and made a glass on metal piece that I'm proudly showcasing on a wall in my house. I picked through a rainbow's worth of colored glass to create my design. Trained staff are situated in every studio to guide you through the process.

Hands On is the busiest when it rains. Plan on being there for two to three hours whenever you stop by. For some projects, you will have to pick it up the following day; they can also ship them home for a fee. There's a $5 admission charge to walk through the studios, but the projects are reasonably priced. My glass piece was around $30.

• Wickman House

The farm-to-table concept in Door County is embraced at Wickman House in Ellison Bay. The restaurant, open 'almost year-round,' is the spot for handcrafted cocktails and a delightful menu. The pasta I tried was stuffed with a smoked carrot puree. And the porkchop was enough food for a party of six. Wickman House boasts a gazebo bar and plenty of adirondack chairs outside underneath whimsical lighting. Ask to sit outside on the screened porch.

• Wilson's Restaurant & Ice Cream

Wilson's Restaurant is a throwback to the 1950s, with table jukeboxes and plenty of charm. The must-get is their ice cream. The cherry ice cream at the counter is popular. I sat at a booth and got generous helpings of their Dusty Road, a mix of French vanilla and Mackinac Island fudge ice cream topped with hot fudge and dusted with malt and of course, a cherry. The Cherry Berry Delight has vanilla ice cream layered between cherries from Door County, along with blueberry and strawberry toppings. The restaurant actually dates back to 1906. ■

Watch Mike Marcotte on KSTP-TV's Twin Cities Live. You can find an extended version of this article, along with more GLBT travel guides, on Mike's website, www.givemethemike.com.

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LEAVE TOMORROW, GET THERE YESTERDAY

Founder André Leavitt shares the background of travel company Time Travels, Inc. and helpful tips for seniors looking to travel.

Time travel; it's something we've all spent long, youthful days dreaming about. Would you go back in time to meet your ancestors? Or perhaps travel in the future and meet your great-great-grandchildren? Or maybe you're scoffing at the idea of reliving your long-ago childhood days. Either way, your past self will be jumping for joy because your dreams can now come true with André Leavitt's company Time Travels, Inc.

BY KASSIDY TARALA

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Okay, so Leavitt doesn't actually have the power to truly create time travel. But she can help you plan a dream vacation that's so perfect for you, you'll forget about time altogether.

Leavitt founded Time Travels, Inc. in 1993 to avoid working for a corporation. As she puts it, "I have a love of travel, and I am not corporate material. I always wanted to work for myself."

While Leavitt's living out the dream by working for herself, she's helping clients plan their ideal getaways. Whether that be a long weekend up north, a sunny trip to anywhere beachside, or an adventurous journey down the Danube, Time Travels Inc. has you covered. Because seniors often feel restricted in travel options due to proximity to loved ones, health-related issues, or possibly a lack of desire to travel alone, it can be difficult for seniors to not only go on vacations, but to even think about them as an option in the first place. With Leavitt's help at Time Travels, Inc., everyone can have the vacation of their dreams, seniors included.

"My best advice for seniors is to find a good travel agent that looks out for your interests and to be able to trust them to cover the details and watch your back while traveling," Leavitt says.

Leavitt says she sends clients of Time Travels, Inc. all over the world by helping book planes, trains, resorts, villas, cruises, and much more. Time Travels, Inc. is great for anyone looking to travel alone, a couple looking for a romantic getaway, or a group of people looking to get out, explore, and have a good time with an old group of friends.

While Leavitt is helping people see the world and experience life like they never have before, she says the real reason Time Travels, Inc. is so successful is because of the way she treats her clients and always prioritizes their needs and desires.

"I am still in business after all these years because I take care of my clients. I enjoy coming up with travel ideas that they have not even considered," she says. "I find my clients great values while booking moderate to higher end travel experiences."

Regardless of price range, destination, or any travel needs or limitations, Time Travels, Inc. has its clients covered. Whether you're planning an expensive, once-in-a-lifetime trip across the globe or a cheaper, quiet weekend on the countryside, Time Travels, Inc. has a great selection of methods of travel, hospitality, entertainment, and deals that work with every pocketbook.

According to Leavitt, a great way to save money while traveling is to travel during the off-season. Not only are large costs like transportation and hospitality cut down quite a bit, but everyday activities, food, drinks, and other tourist attractions are typically cheaper during the travel off-season, too. And for seniors, traveling during the off season can be especially appreciated as it guarantees smaller crowds and fewer long lines.

If you've let go of your childhood dream to travel through time, hold onto it for just a little longer. Time Travels, Inc. is just what you've been looking for. Travel the world, learn about other cultures, meet new people, and experience life like you never have before. Plan your trip with Time Travels, Inc., and you are guaranteed to have the trip of a lifetime. Maybe even travel back in time to your past self and let them know the good news. ■

For more information about Time Travels, Inc., visit their website at timetravelsinc.com.

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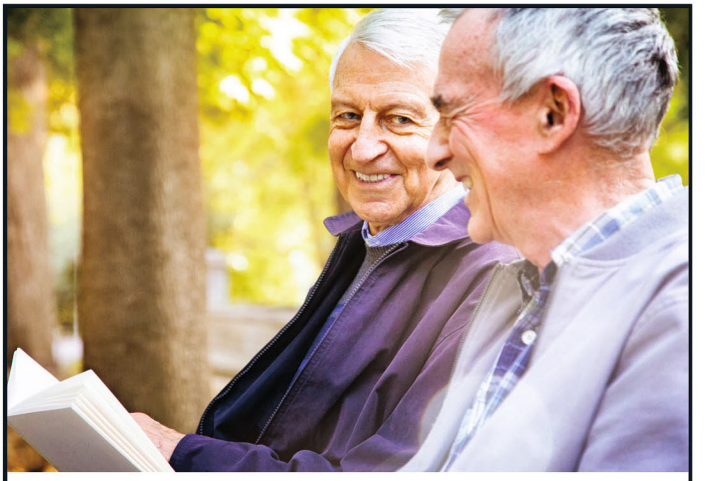

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RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2018 Mazda CX-9

What would be your "perfect" road trip vehicle?

This is a question that yields many answers. But, there are a few things to consider. How many people are you taking? What are you bringing along? Where are you going? How much money do you have to spend on a road trip?

Those are the basic questions. Believe us when we say that there's a lot more to consider than just throwing people and bags in a car.

If you are driving on a highway for hours, comfort is important, right? What about entertainment? Extra space for souvenirs? Reliability? Performance? Ease of operation? Safety?

If it is starting to sound like you usual Ride Review in *Lavender*, it is. But, we put a twist in it. Because this issue is about fall getaways, we wondered which vehicle would be perfect for one?

In the GLBT community, it would be some Subaru, Mitsubishi Outlander, or Volvo XC-something. All of these were wonderful choices, but we were given a challenge. What if it wasn't any of our more favorite vehicles? What if it was something else?

When a 2018 Mazda CX-9 Grand Touring AWD model arrived for us to evaluate, the challenge was on to see if this brand-changing, evolving three-row SUV/crossover was the "perfect" road trip vehicle.

Perhaps that was too easy to send out a challenge, because the CX-9 delivered what could be the best design package in its class. This is the best expression of what Mazda intended through its KODO—Soul of Motion design language. The top edge of the grille form just out more than the rest of the front clip, with an enlarged, chrome-encased grille flanked by small headlamps units. The lower fascia is integrated well with this front clip, creating a bold statement to anyone seeing it in their rearview mirror.

While the front end starts the conversation, the rest of the body continues it. It seems smaller than the previous generation CX-9, but with taller doors and a lower ground height than before. The rear end is very compelling with slim tail lamp units and a high beltline that frames the two halves of the tailgate perfectly. Most vehicles in its class usually do one design element well and forget about the rest. Not Mazda. They created a handsome and compelling looking mid-sized three-row SUV that is aspirational and very handsome.

This Grand Touring AWD model wore big 20-inch wheels with Bridgestone Ecopia all-season tires. The chrome overall was tastefully done, giving the impression of upward mobility in a vehicle that is aimed at the heart of the mid-sized three-row market. Mazda may have something that could do battle with the likes of the Ford Explorer, Toyota Highlander and Hyundai Santa Fe (three-row model, that is), while staring down the barrel of premium products, such as the Audi Q7 and Mercedes-Benz GLE.

With the Grand Touring, you get perforated leather seats, wrapped in some large chairs up front and two more rows of seating behind them. Due to a wider center console, there is a feeling that the front seats are closer to it, rather than balanced between it and the door. The chairs are very supportive with excellent power adjustments for rake, height, recline and lumbar support. The second-row seats are adjustable for rake and recline, as well. It also has a single lever control to flip and move forward the second rows for third-row access. It also helps to have extra wide doors that open to almost 90 degrees for better overall third-row access.

Second-row room is fantastic for adults of all sizes. Third-row seating is best for children not needing additional safety equipment. Child seats are best left for the second row, for parental access of course! The third row can also be folded flat for a great load area. In total, cargo space behind the second row is 38.2 cubic feet. If you have all three rows up, the CX-9 gives you just 14.4 cubic feet of cargo space. For larger items, the CX-9 can give up to 71.2 cubic feet of space to take it all on the road.

New for Mazda is a color TFT screen in the right dial of the instrument cluster. It shows plenty of information for trip, fuel consumption, and vehicle functions. This screen should appear on other Mazda models within the next model year and so. Otherwise, the large three-dial instrument cluster is indeed a nod to the idea of Feel(ing) Alive with its sporty intentions on display. The steering wheel offers better, more tactile switches for audio, cruise control and the information screen. Mazda's recent tablet-like infotainment screen sits on top of the center of the instrument panel, with the control knob and separate volume control on the console. Additional audio and climate controls anchor the wide center console with the shifter and other pertinent controls at the driver's reach.

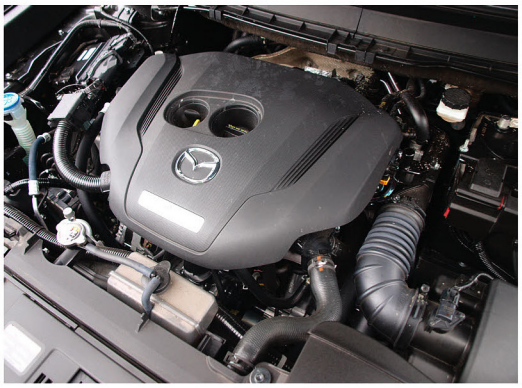
Mazda Connect works quite well. Bluetooth is great for phone calls and music playback. The USB connection can be fed back from the center console through the opening in-between the armrest/compartment access. Bose offers 12 speakers of superb sound throughout the CX-9's vast cabin.

Unlike the current Mazda lineup, the CX-9 offerings do not stop with the Grand Touring. Mazda's upmarket aspirations are summed up in a new Signature trim level. The Nappa leather seating, woodgrain trim, and additional LED lighting elevate the Mazda CX-9 to new heights.

While most of its competitors are settling with V6 power, Mazda dropped their Skyactiv turbocharged 2.5-liter four-cylinder engine underneath the CX-9s hood. The result is a horsepower rating that actually depends on which fuel you put in the tank. If you elect to go with just regular fuel, you are limited to just 227 horsepower. Fuel up with the 93 octane Premium stuff and that horsepower rating goes up to 250. For octane ratings in-between, your actual horsepower will vary depending on the fuel grade being pumped in. No matter which fuel you use, the torque number is the same at 310 pound-feet.

Sending power to Mazda's all-wheel drive system is the Skyactiv six-speed automatic transmission. This is a smooth shifting transmission, facilitating a very smooth and powerful engine. Turbo lag is undetectable with a quick throttle response. Of any vehicle in its class, I love how it responds to the accelerator and keeps the momentum up nicely. Consider this in the context of a 4,300-pound vehicle, with a towing capacity of 3,500 pounds. In terms of fuel economy, I averaged 22.8 MPG.

You will appreciate the ride quality in the new CX-9. It is smooth for the family and for the driver up front. The suspension absorbs the cracks and bumps very well. Cornering is on the soft side, so expect some roll and lean, if pushed past the limit. Steering is quite good with excellent feel on-center with a good turning radius and great response from the wheel. Expect a bit of numbness, which is expected in today's SUVs. Brakes are among the best in class, with great stopping power and response in normal and panic situations.

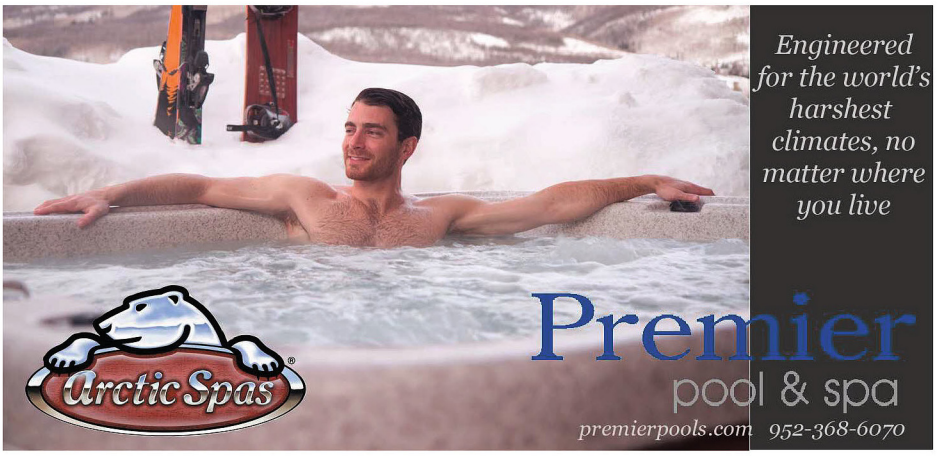


The CX-9 was designed for active safety integration. This includes features such as Smart Brake Support and Smart City Brake Support, both using the sensor behind the Mazda badge to ensure that the vehicle is stopped when an obstruction is in the way. By obstruction, I mean the vehicle in front of you. The CX-9 Grand Touring also offers as standard other active safety features, such as Lane Departure Warning, Lane Keep Assist, Rear Backup Sensors, Rear Cross-Traffic Alert, Blind Spot Monitoring, and Mazda Radar Cruise Control.

Pricing for the CX-9 starts with a Sport model that is well-equipped for middle-of-the road customers. Pricing starts at $32,130 for the front-drive model. Adding all-wheel drive bumps the base price up to $33,930. The Grand Touring is not the top of the line, however, our example came with a sticker price of $45,560. If you must ask, the top shelf Signature model has a base price of $44,315.

The obvious answer to the question about the Mazda CX-9's worthiness as a road trip vehicle is "yes." "Yes," it will accommodate up to seven people over longer distances. "Yes," it can deliver performance, comfort, and space to execute such a journey.

And, "yes," you can consider the Mazda CX-9 as a worthy three-row midsized SUV/crossover for your Rainbow family, or sort of "family" you are taking along inside of it. ■



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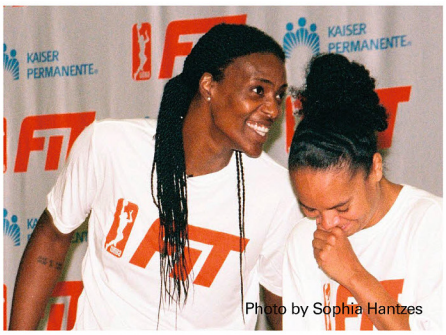
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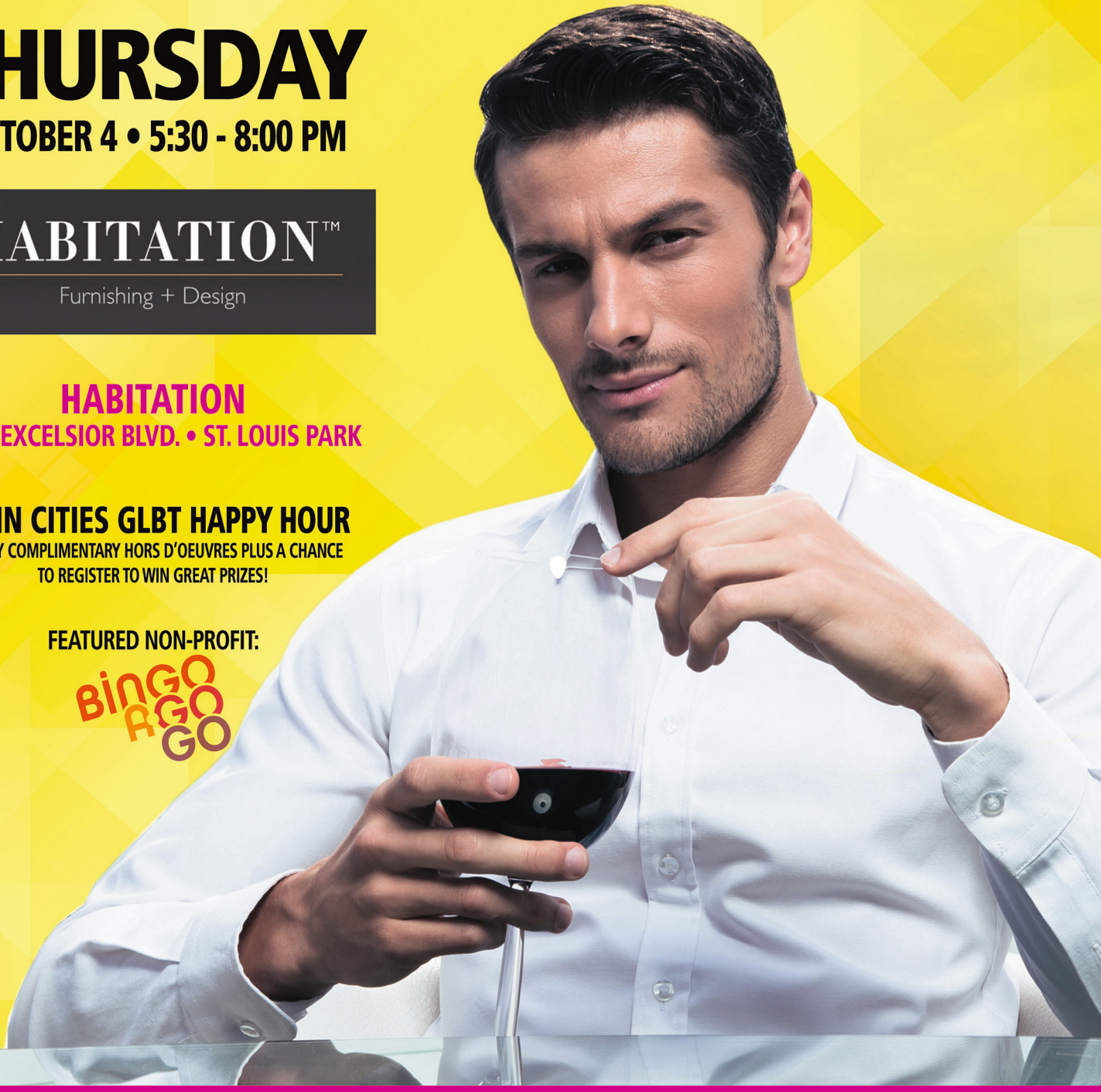

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